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SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: POLITICAL REACTIONS TO
GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION

REF: ABIDJAN 997

Classified By: Economic Officer Erfana Dar for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) Opposition UDPCI party leader and Minister of Cooperation and African Integration Albert Mabri Toikeuse told the Ambassador that Prime Minister Banny did not consult with his ministers before he announced the cabinet's resignation on September 7 (reftel). New Forces (NF) spokesman Sidiki Konate told the Ambassador yesterday that the New Forces are in stand-by mode and they do not object in principle to the formation of a new government but are waiting to see what the PM will propose. However, in a September 8 press release, the NF criticize Banny for dissolving the government without prior consultation with political leaders and describe his action as a violation of UNSC Resolution 1633.

12. (U) The G-7 opposition parties (which include the three FN factions) also released a communique published on September 8, in which they reject the dissolution of the government and the presentation of Banny's resignation to President Gbagbo, who they assert did not appoint the Prime Minister. The G-7 refuses to participate in any government formed by a prime minister appointed outside of the framework of UNSC 1633 and calls on the international community to help bring about the naming of a new executive to replace Banny to manage the transition to new elections.

13. (C) Comment: As is too often the case, Prime Minister Banny has created more problems for himself by trying to do too many things on his own. His failure to consult with his ministers before announcing the government's resignation is all the more puzzling because he walked straight out of a cabinet meeting to announce it. On the other hand, the NF and political opposition, by sitting aside with their arms folded waiting for the Prime Minister to come to them, are missing an opportunity to influence the shaping of the new government. Whether Prime Minister Banny was technically appointed by the President or the international community is far less important than the direction where this country is headed in the days and weeks to come.
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